Statement for the Record

Ms. Betty Sapp

Director, National Reconnaissance Office

Before the House Armed Services Committee

Subcommittee on Strategic Forces

25 March 2015

NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED BY THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
STRATEGIC FORCES SUBCOMMITTEE
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Introduction

Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Cooper, and distinguished Members of the Committee, I am pleased to appear before you today on behalf of the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) to discuss National Security Space Activities. It is an honor for me to appear alongside our mission partners from the Department of Defense (DoD), Mr. Douglas Loverro, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Space Policy; Mr. Dyke Weatherington, Principal Director for Space, Strategic and Intelligence Systems, Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics; Lt General John Raymond, Commander, United States Strategic Command, Joint Functional Component Command for Space; and General John Hyten, Commander, Air Force Space Command. I am also honored to appear alongside one of my primary mission partners from the Intelligence Community, Mr. Robert Cardillo, Director of the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency. The NRO's close relationship and continuing collaboration with our mission partners are vital to maintaining our Nation's superiority in space.

The unclassified nature of today's hearing precludes me from discussing many details of NRO programs, as well as sharing some of our greatest successes. However, I welcome additional opportunities to meet in another setting to discuss with you NRO capabilities, and the value of NRO contributions to National Security.

Support to the Warfighter

I would like to start by highlighting the real bottom line for the NRO – our support to the warfighter. The NRO has become a key

global military operations enabler and many capabilities are integral to the conflict in Afghanistan and other theaters. In addition to traditional NRO ISR systems and support, we provide a wide array of focused capabilities to help solve specific, critical ISR needs for deployed personnel around the world. We've brought dozens of innovative ISR solutions to the fight. These services, products, and tools directly contribute to the highest priority missions, to include: countering Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs); identifying and tracking High-Value Targets; and improving battlespace awareness.

One of the most important capabilities we provide to the fight is our people – our on-site problem-solvers. To ensure users are able to take advantage of NRO capabilities, we developed the Field Representative program that puts NRO subject matter experts, both military and civilian, at the combatant commands and in the theater battlespace. These men and women serve as technical liaison officers to units, and support specific NRO programs and capabilities focused on the warfighter. Every day, they have a direct and positive influence on combat operations and mission success, to include saving the lives of U.S. and Coalition forces.

I'll cover just a few highlights, and while the NRO's greatest successes may not be discussed in this setting, I am proud to share just a small part of what we bring to the fight. One of the most successful efforts against the IED threat is an NRO-developed program called RED DOT. RED DOT leverages multi-Intelligence sources to provide an integrated IED-risk situational picture that can be delivered directly to the warfighter in harm's way. From 2012 through

2014, RED DOT warnings resulted in the removal of more than 700 IEDs from the battlefield, saving countless lives and limbs. Now, it is being adopted for use by our Coalition partners, and other combatant commands.

Our Tactical Defense Space Reconnaissance (TacDSR) program has been highly effective in delivering NRO capabilities into military platforms, combat systems, and weapons for operational warfighters. TacDSR directly answers emerging war fighting intelligence requirements of the combatant commands, DoD services, agencies, joint staffs, and other tactical users.

A real strength of the NRO is our ability to fuse multi-intelligence data to support warfighter intelligence needs. We have helped the warfighter visualize large volumes of data temporally and spatially, establishing patterns of life, identifying the unusual within a multitude of fused data sets, and integrating full motion video data with automated multi-intelligence tipping, cueing, and alerting capabilities. Our cutting-edge solutions combine GEOINT and SIGINT, and span the space, air, and ground operational domains to provide the warfighter a comprehensive common operational picture, enhancing the ability to find, fix, and finish targets.

State of the NRO Today

We are committed to smart acquisition investments and practices to ensure continued global coverage and availability of our vital National Security systems and we work tirelessly to continue to deliver these systems on time and within budget. All of our major

system acquisitions are “green” in terms of acquisition performance and last year our acquisition programs successfully delivered and launched three new satellites into orbit. These successful launches are a visible testament to the diligent efforts of our program teams who successfully acquire and deliver these complex systems, and each one signifies enhanced intelligence capabilities for the warfighter and improved decision advantage for our analysts and policy-makers. The NRO also remains committed to maintaining the health of the launch vehicle industrial base for assured access to space. We partner closely with the Air Force on our launch service acquisitions and have developed a strategy that seeks to lower launch costs by re-introducing competition for National Security Space (NSS) missions, while meeting mission needs and maintaining mission success. The NRO Launch-79 (NROL-79) mission was the first launch service acquisition pursued as part of the combined Air Force and NRO competitive strategy for the Evolved Expendable Launch Vehicle (EELV) program. However, because no new entrants had completed certification, the Air Force determined it was in the best interest of the Government to cancel the NROL-79 competitive solicitation. We learned a tremendous amount during the Air Force certification and source selection activities, and we continue to improve and refine the process in cooperation with the Air Force. We are committed to working with the Air Force, NASA, and commercial space providers to ensure our Nation’s launch and space industrial base remains strong enough to meet our mission requirements. In addition to developing, acquiring, launching, and operating the world’s most technically advanced space systems, we have

also sustained our success in financial management. For the sixth year in a row, the NRO received a clean audit opinion on our financial statements, a truly unprecedented accomplishment within the IC. This positive outcome was the result of continued hard work across the NRO and the culmination of a diligently planned and executed effort to continue to improve our business processes. We hope to sustain this track record of clean audits into the future.

Priorities for the Future

The NRO remains committed to maintaining its stellar record of acquisition and program successes, while delivering a more capable, integrated, resilient, and affordable future NRO architecture to keep pace with changing targets and threats while assuring the U.S. an enduring decision advantage.

NRO systems assist national policy formulation, as well as intelligence, military, and homeland security operations, consistent with international law or convention. Using increasingly diverse sensor systems, the NRO provides customers with unprecedented flexibility, enabling intelligence integration, assessment, and problem-solving across geographic boundaries and intelligence domains. These capabilities contribute directly to our nation's ability to achieve diplomatic goals, deter aggression and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, combat terrorism, and conduct security operations worldwide. Over the coming years, the NRO will continue to incorporate revolutionary new technologies into our architecture – technologies necessary to keep pace with changing targets and changing

threats in space. These enhancements are made possible by our investments in research and development, and we will continue these strong investments to enable relevant and effective future capabilities. The NRO will also continue to emphasize improvements in ground systems necessary to support current operations in the Ukraine, Syria, as well as the broader fight against ISIL, while designing and developing the future ground system necessary to ensure we can bring the full force of our capabilities to bear on future intelligence problems.

The NRO's strategic intent is to ensure the right overhead sensor, or set of sensors, is available whenever it is needed and for as long as it is needed. Realizing that intent requires more persistence in space, and a ground system that can be an effective quarterback for the entire architecture.

Resilience

The NRO fully recognizes that space is an increasingly contested and congested environment. Foreign nations understand our country's reliance on space and seek means to deny our space advantage. For that reason, the NRO is committed to making its entire mission architecture more resilient, and we have made significant investments to that end. Those investments have been informed by detailed modeling and analysis, and driven by strategy. We have worked this collaboratively with the DoD, the IC, and the broader space community. We believe we've made the right investments to ensure operational

freedom and an enduring U.S. decision advantage – but those improvements are only possible with the full FY16 budget request.

Budget and Launch Concerns

As the pace of change in targets and threats facing our nation continues to accelerate, the threat of sequestration is the biggest threat to maintaining the U.S. advantage in space. We see what our adversaries are doing and how much they are investing in space-related capabilities. The question we must answer is whether we want to invest to maintain the space advantage – the decision advantage – we have today, or not.

We are also concerned about restrictions on the use of the RD-180 engine contained in Section 1608 of the FY 2015 NDAA. This language, as currently written, may delay or prevent meaningful competition for NRO launches, and could result in a multi-year gap without more than one competitive launch provider for our payloads. We are also concerned about the potential retirement of the Delta IV Medium and the impacts to the Delta IV Heavy launch vehicle, which we use for critical national security missions. The future of the Delta IV Heavy is especially important since it is currently the only demonstrated and certified launch vehicle providing Heavy lift capability for the nation. We are working with the Air Force and our industry partners to address these challenges. But, we need your help with Section 1608, and in ensuring necessary investment in U.S. space capabilities and resilience.

People

Our people are responsible for the tremendous successes of the past, and they must sustain that record of success into the future. Since the NRO was formed more than 50 years ago, we have "borrowed" all our personnel from across the DoD and the Intelligence Community (IC). That workforce model had become increasingly problematic. Thanks to the support of Congress and our community partners, the NRO established a Workforce Stability Initiative last year. Through this initiative, we have stabilized the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) element of our engineering workforce by establishing the Office of Space Reconnaissance, and the DoD element by forming an NRO Cadre, recently approved by the Secretary of Defense. These elements represent about one-third of our government workforce and will provide us with enhanced stability across core NRO functions. We will also continue to leverage rotational personnel from the CIA and the DoD for their broad-based experience and innovation. By strengthening our core NRO workforce while also leveraging rotational workforce capabilities, the NRO will continue to have the people necessary to provide the Nation with the premier space reconnaissance capabilities for National security.

Conclusion

The men and women of the NRO embody our core values of Integrity and Accountability, Teamwork Built on Respect and Diversity, and Mission Excellence. It is our highly skilled personnel who go above and beyond to execute our mission to provide "Innovative Overhead

Intelligence Systems for National Security." Driven by our extraordinary people, the NRO will continue on the path of delivering acquisition and operations excellence, as well as the unparalleled innovation that is the hallmark of our history and the foundation of our future. We encourage you to continue visits to the NRO, our mission ground stations, and satellite factories for detailed discussions on how our systems directly support the national security of the United States.

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for your continued support of the National Reconnaissance Office and the opportunity to appear before you today.